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19 Zaven Yeghiayan

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INTRODUCTION

I

Zaven Yeghiayan, Armenian Patriarch

To better understand how the key official Turkish documents concerning the Armenocide were transferred from Turkey to Europe, a short biographical note regarding Patriarch Zaven Yeghiayan is necessary to clarify heretofore unknown incidents.

Patriarch Zaven was born in Mosul September 8, 1868. His father was a married priest. Zaven completed his studies in Armash and was ordained a priest 1895 by Archbishop Malachia Ormanian.

He was designated primate of Erzerum 1906, promoted primate of Diarbekir in 1910, elevated to the rank of bishop by Catholicos Mattiew Izmirlian.

On the 30th of August 1913, he was elected Patriarch and arrived in Constantinople in November of 1913. He began his political actions by collaborating with Giers, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople.

The Turkish Government exiled him to Bagdad, issuing a ministerial decree on July 28, 1916. Dr. Vahram Torkomian, personal physician of Sultan Reshad V, and Mgrs. Dolci, Apostolic Delegate in Constantinople, called for the joint intervention of German Ambassador Metternich, Austrian Ambassador Pallavicini and American ^{Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires/} ~~Ambassador H. Morgenthau~~ to save the life of Patriarch Zaven Yeghiayan, because to be exiled under escort was equivalent to being killed along the highway.

Besides the gendarme officers, a secret police-man, namely Hidayette - a former defrocked Armenian Catholic priest - accompanied him in his exile.

Zaven Patriarch arrived at Der Zor about 10 September 1916. Zeki Bey, Mutesarif of Der Zor, Mustafa Bey, Director of the Police Station, and Bedri Bey, Assistant Director at the same station, prepared a plan to kill the Patriarch. Zeki Bey designated Bedri Bey to accompany the Patriarch from Zor to south in direction of Bagdad. It was Bedri Bey who had to actually commit the murder, for gangs of chetes and brigands would have attacked the carriage of the Patriarch and during the disturbance they were to shot him.

Arriving at Ana, a town south of Der Zor, bordering the Euphrates River, Bedri Bey went to meet the Kaymakam of Ana, Said Bey, and revealed the plan they had contrived at Der Zor. Said Bey refused to have any part of this, but Bedri Bey insisted saying this was Zeki Bey's order. Said Bey threatened to expose the plan, and in this manner saved the Patriarch's life.

He arrived in Bagdad September 23, 1916.

During the period of Patriarch Zaven's exile, the Turkish Government made an agreement, through Jemal Pasha, Fourth Army Commander-in-Chief, with Sahag Khabayan, Catholicos of the Sea of Cilicia, who has been exiled first to Aleppo and then to Jerusalem.

The agreement consisted of the following conditions:

1. Complete break with the sea of Etchmiadzin, severing

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all relations;

2. Abrogation of the Armenian Constitution and publication of a new constitution;
3. Suppression of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Sea of Cilicia, Sea of Aghtamar and Patriarchate of Jerusalem;
4. All of whom were to be unified into one merely religious institution -under Sahag Khabayan- who would then be catholicos-patriarch of All Armenians in the Ottoman Empire maintaining his official residence in the Monastery of St. James, Jerusalem, appointing a temporary vicar to serve at Constantinople.

On November 11, 1918 the Armenian Constitution abrogated by the Turkish Government in July 1916, was reestablished.

When the British Army occupied Bagdad, Patriarch Zaven decided to return to Constantinople to assume his office in the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate at Kum Kapu, February 19, 1919.

Zaven Patriarch organized the Armenian Information Bureau to collect all documents concerning the deportation and massacres of the Armenians, especially those revealed by the Turkish Court Martial that tried the criminals responsible for the deportation and massacre of the Armenian people.

Attacks made by the Mustafa Kemal Pasha's Nationalists threatened Smyrna and Constantinople in August 1922; Zaven Patriarch then decided to transfer the Archives elsewhere. The archival materials arrived in Manchester, England, on November 1922.

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Zaven Patriarch's Memoirs and the Transfer
of Archival Materials

To the academic and scholarly community we disclose some pertinent facts, with some reservations, about materials in the archives concerning Armenocide. During the Turkish Court Martial trials held at Constantinople 1919-1922, Armenians were the litigants and in such juridical capacity held the right of possession to certified copies or simple copies of all documents and records of the proceedings.

The present document was in the files and records of the Turkish Court Marshal.

It is not yet time to reveal the entire historical truth

with all its particulars regarding the transfer of the archives and archival materials from Constantinople to foreign countries. Setting aside for the time being the contents of numerous precious and interesting documents concerning the actual transfer, we prefer to merely draw from previously published accounts.

In 1947, the Intellectual Service Bureau in Cairo, Egypt, published "Patriarchal Memoirs, Documents and Testimonies"¹⁾ of Archbishop Zaven Yeghiayan, Armenian Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, who retired to Bagdad and wrote his book. In the preface, dated 7 May 1947, he wrote

Shortly before the War [World War II K], I undertook to write my memoirs. Unfortunately there was a lack of facilities for me in Bagdad. In particular, indispensable documents I was able to obtain only in part on my visit to Jerusalem. 2)

In its introductory comments on the Bagdad-Jerusalem travels of Patriarch Zaven, the Intellectual Service Bureau revealed interesting and precious information concerning the whereabouts of the archives and documents relative to Armenocide.

Fortunately it is all written down. Upon his [Patriarch's K] order, documents and records dating from his term as Patriarch [1913-1916 and 1919-1922 December K] had been transferred from Constantinople to Marseilles and then to the Monastery at Jerusalem. 3)

1. Archbishop Zaven Yeghiayan, Badriarkagan Hooshers, Vavera-krer yev Vugayootiunner, (Cairo, New Star Press, 1947.

2. Ibid. p. V.

3. Ibid. p. III.

Therefore, His Beatitude undertook the responsibility to go to Jerusalem and do additional research 3) for the documentation of his book.

Patriarch Zaven provided additional particulars pertaining to the transfer of the archival materials, writing The Information Bureau, (Constantinople) thanks to its two proficient and intelligent workers, Messrs. Arshag Alboyajian and Garabed Noorian (in 1918-1922 K), furnished data requested by the Embassis 4) (Allied High Commissioners K) and rendered invaluable assistance to them. 5)

Concerning his Bagdad-Jerusalem travels and the documents found in the archives and archival materials which he had ordered transferred to Europe, Patriarch Zaven says

During the summer of 1938 I made a special trip to Jerusalem to investigate the Information Bureau's archives sent in November (from Constantinople K) to Mgrs. Krikoris Balakian in Manchester for safekeeping, and through the efforts of Patriarch Torkom (Koushagian K), had been subsequently transferred to Jerusalem where they had been carefully preserved.

I was greatly surprised to find a complete collection of documents and records of all important events from the period 1918 through 1922.

----- pp. 302-303.
4. and 5. Op. Cit. The material was first transferred to Manchester, England, then sent to Marseilles, France and finally delivered to Jerusalem, Palestine, under British Mandate at that time. See communications from Admiral de Robeck to Lord Curzon, Public Record Office, London, E 11654/1340/44, and E 14847/1340/44.

Arshag Alboyajian's work in collecting and classifying the material is of great value.

Unfortunately I was only able to remain there (Jerusalem K) for a few days to utilize them for my work. 6)

By-laws, established for the Information Bureau and ratified by the Civil Assembly, state

the Information Bureau has been constituted under the immediate control and responsibility of one of the members of the subordinate Committees of the Civil Assembly (Kaghakagan Joghov).

Accordingly thereto, all manner of old and new statistics pertaining to the Armenians and the Armenian case would be centralized...data concerning all the episodes and deportations; statistical descriptions of plundered property, both movable and fixed belonging to the (Armenian K) nation and individuals; in particular, data and bibliographic details as complete as possible, about the Turkish officials guilty of having participated in the crimes committed during the last deportations; documents and testimonies gathered concerning their culpability and statistics regarding Moslemized Armenians of both sexes and kidnapped orphans....

Data concerning various old and new (Armenian K) national organizations, political parties, as well as independent unions and associations; statistical data pertaining to national and educational activities; lists describing the quality and quantity of national wealth; oral and written statements by Europeans about our national case, as well as character of Armenians, and so on; concise notes concerning official and unofficial written accounts by the Turks regarding Armenians....

the centralization of data communicated about us to the Armenian or foreign press...

Garabed Noorian, chosen by the Patriarch and elected member of the Civil Assembly, once having been approved by the (Armenian K) National Assembly, June 1920, has presented a report about said Bureau, from which I extract the following several paragraphs which fully elucidate the role played by the Information Bureau.

* [Information Bureau
Constantinople K]
+ [Patriarch Zaven K]

Garabed Noorian then describes some of the accomplishments of the Bureau.

1. To present the conduct of the Turks vis-à-vis the Armenians: this being urgent, it has constituted the major part of the Bureau's activities. The (Allied K) High Commissions, as well as the Republic and the Armenian National Delegation, by means of three hundred reports have dispersed information about all the attacks carried out by Turks against Armenians dating from the Armistice; by means of an additional two hundred ninety two reports, indispensable, factual documents have been furnished concerning the designers of the deportation plot whom the Turks (Authorities and Court Martial K) wish to vindicate....
2. Massacres and deportations. The Bureau has accumulated ...data on massacres and deportations based upon factual evidence and verified.
3. Statistics....the Bureau has undertaken the preparation of a compendium to describe the actual post-bellum state of affairs of all the dioceses in the Patriarchate, i.e. the number of churches, monasteries and schools; quantity of (Armenian K) national possessions and properties; and population figures for each prelacy.
4. ...
5. Accumulation of documents and library. The Bureau is

accumulating and classifying.....all worthwhile documents pertaining to Armenian social and political life. Thus, more than six hundred reports, lists of statistics and so on, published by Armenian associations, or official organizations, have already been classified.....7

As stated above by Zaven Patriarch, documents, records and archival materials concerning the Armenocide, were transferred November 1922 from Constantinople to Manchester, Marseilles and Jerusalem. These documents and records in many languages, mostly in Turkish Osmanli and Armenian, were also transmitted by Allied High Commissions at Constantinople to their respective governments. 8)

Scholars and researchers may find an extensive number of official Turkish documents, records and materials in the archives particularly those from the Turkish Court Martial at Constantinople trying 1919-1921 persons allegedly responsible for having ordered, organized and carried out massacres.

Captain Fazıl Bey's document comprising eighty-two pages, in Turkish Osmanli, is one of above mentioned two hundred ninety two reports, indispensable factual documents that have been furnished concerning the organizers of the deportation, whom the Turks (Turkish Authorities and Turkish Court Martial K) wished to vindicate to serve justice. 9)

7) Op. cit. pp. 302-305.

8) See Public Record Office, London, E 11654/1340/44 and

E 14847/1340/44, communications from Admiral de Robeck, British High Commissioner to Lord Curzon, Foreign Minister.

9) op. cit. p. 304.